

" I CAN SEE AGAIN"

DAVID G. WITTELS

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

"I CAN SEE AGAIN!"

By David G. Wittels

BERNARD M. KELLMURRAY'S voice came chuckling over the telephone. "No," he said, "you needn't take a taxi to find McClellan Hall. It is part of the Old Campus of Yale, in the heart of New Haven, and you can almost see it from your hotel window. I'll tell you exactly how to find it."

He started from the beginning, building an exact visual picture: "When you come out of the front entrance of the hotel, pause a moment and look about you. You will see, diagonally off to your right, a group of buildings. They are mostly what is known as collegiate Gothic in architecture. You know the reaching arches and spires of the Gothic style? The first buildings you will see are of Indiana limestone, and at casual glance they appear dingy brown in color, because they are weather-beaten. But when you come close and really look, you will see there is a great deal of yellow and green in the stone."

He emphasized the color words, pronouncing them almost lovingly.

"These buildings," he continued, "are connected by ornamental iron gates, some of them quite elaborately worked, with almost lacework of iron above them. They are painted black—a rich black. Enter any one of these gates. Inside you will find flagged and tree-lined walks crisscrossing and angling in all directions. Inside the square, too, you will find two Colonial-type buildings, almost identical in size and shape."

At this point Kellmurray could have said, as it developed later, that one had a statue in front of it, and that the other, where he was, did not. Instead, he continued to elaborate: "Both these buildings have many windows, with the woodwork painted fresh, clean white, and with slatted shutters painted green. Both are mostly of red brick. But you will see that the walls of one are far more thickly covered with ivy than the other, and that the bricks of one are more browned with age than those of the other. I am in the newer, brighter one. Oh, yes. It is the one without a statue in front of it."

Kellmurray is an intelligent man and a scholar. Ordinarily he speaks succinctly and directly to the point. But for a while, in these last few months, he indulged in an orgy of visually evocative words. He luxuriated, perhaps unconsciously, in talk of color and sights. This was because, after being apparently doomed to spend his life in darkness, he suddenly got a reprieve from the night. For nearly five years he was blind and now, as if by a miracle, he can see again.

The story of what happened to Bernard Michael Kellmurray is like a miracle play falling in three parts. The first is a picture of a young man, healthy and intensely alive; and the curtain to that one is a curtain in more senses than one. The second consists of a slow and bitter adjustment to a life of blindness, but it closes on a note of accomplishment—almost of triumph—for Kellmurray made that adjustment brilliantly, and, in so doing, achieved a dream. The third is that of the miracle, the unexpected recovery of sight after all hope was gone.

Kellmurray was twenty-six when it happened. There was nothing in the past to forewarn him that he might someday lose his sight. There was no history of blindness in his family, and he had no disease or injury. Even when the night started to creep upon him, neither he nor his doctors realized what was happening.

He was a handsome young man, with crisply wavy blond hair, a sensitive face and alive, blue-gray eyes. He was a graduate of Yale and loved books, the opera and the theater. He was athletically built—five feet nine and nearly 170 pounds—and shot golf in the low seventies. During his summer college vacations he acted as assistant pro at the Ausable Club at St. Hubert's, in Essex County, New York. He played tennis and swam and coached baseball; he played the piano and danced. He had fallen in and out of love a half dozen times.

Life was good, though he didn't know yet exactly what he wanted to do with it. Once, while still in college, he had toyed with the idea of learning to become a moving-picture producer. That was while he was acting with The Dramat, the Yale undergraduate dramatic group. There was even a job in the offering for a while, but the studio failed and nothing came of it. After graduation he taught Spanish in a Utica high school for a year and tutored Latin on the side. When his father died in 1933 he took over the management of his garage and automobile agency for a year.

In the back of his mind always was the thought that what he really wanted to do, when he got around to it, was to go into educational and vocational guidance work, preferably at Yale. But there was a depression on, and he needed money for post-graduate work to fit him for that field; and he was young and there was lots of time. Through a politician he got a stopgap job as an auditor with the AAA in Washington, and then switched over to the PWA in the same kind of job.

Summer Twilight

IN THE summer of 1936 Kellmurray had an attack of pleurisy. Maybe that has no bearing on what followed; the doctors won't say definitely. But, searching for a beginning somewhere, Kellmurray thinks that may have been it, and the doctors say that is a likely assumption. Kellmurray took it so lightly he went to a party and returned to work before he was fully recovered. That resulted in a relapse. Even then he wasn't seriously ill.



Bernard Kellmurray, now thirty-one, was totally, hopelessly blind from July, 1937, to November, 1941. His sight returned as inexplicably as it went. Pleurisy seems to have had something to do with its loss, Vitamin B₁ with its return, but both are guesses.

Resigned to a lifetime of darkness, Kellmurray learned Braille, was by a Seeing Eye dog, conquered his agony of soul, fought his way back to usefulness in society, then —

Suddenly on the afternoon of November tenth, his right eye watered and he saw again for the first time in more than four years. On Thanksgiving Eve, his left eye watered, and its sight returned. His sight is back to stay, specialists say.

Are the blind compensated in time for the loss of their sight by acuter hearing, sense of touch and other perceptions? Kellmurray is scornful of this popular theory. Blindness, he says, is a disaster without any compensation.

Soon after he was out again, however, he began to notice he was having trouble with his eyes. Things began to grow dim. He paid little attention to it at first. After all, he had just been ill, and was working hard, and his job imposed a strain on his eyes.

Then he began to notice that he was driving through red lights and turning up one-way streets and having too many narrow escapes from running into other cars and into pedestrians. He lived thirty-five minutes from the PWA offices, and driving was the most practical way to get to and from work. For a while he tried following other cars closely, and stopping and starting when they did. But this got to be too dangerous, and so, early in October, 1936, he got a leave of absence and went home to Utica.

He thought all he needed were a good rest and the advice of an oculist. He got the rest, but no noticeable improvement. If the doctors he went to at that time knew what was happening, they did not tell him and successfully kept him from guessing.

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POST SCRIPTS

The Very Tired Businessman

A PILLOW for Oliver's shoulder!
A hassock for Oliver's knees!
And let there be added
An armchair well-padded
Wherein he may loll at his ease.
For he's scarcely alive—
Hark, how weary his cough is—
From tolling till five
In the strenuous office.

This morning the conference finally occurred there,
(Remind him to tell you a story he heard there.)
The mail was a mountain, the phone was a shriek.
(Yes, Benny rang up about bowling next week.)

And nagged by a hunch
That his lawyer was due,
He hastened from lurch
At a quarter past two,

(Though he managed to stop at the tailor's en route
To peer at the progress they'd made on his suit.)

Then all afternoon how the salesman beleaguered
him,
Stenographers plagued him and clients fatigued
him,
How partners appressed him with talk of inflation.
(And Woodie blew in from a Southern vacation
To brag of his prowess with rod and with line
Till time to be catching the first-twenty-nine.)

So speed now with Oliver's slippers
And hurry his soup to the board,
Since the turbulent town
Has completely worn down
The spirits and health of my lord.
And what matter, my girl,
If you've been to the wars
And your head's in a whirl
From your frivolous chores?

It's wisest, I think, to have nothing to say
Concerning your most unremarkable day:
The mending, the sorting, the grocer boy's ructions;
Instructions to roofers—the master's instructions.

The trips to the train
And the marketing quand'ry,
The leaks in the drain
And the loss in the laundry.
The memos. The phone calls. The interviews tedious
With sellers of brushes and encyclopedious,
With parish committees and fire-warden's headmen,
With cleaners and plumbers, mechanics and
breadmen.
The paying of bills that we're currently rich in.
The neighborhood crisis. The one in the kitchen.
The answers to letters from Oliver's kith—
Oh, these are the joys to be taciturn with.

For Oliver's home from the city,
In need of his rest and his rations.
And it wouldn't seem right
If you prattled tonight
Of simple domestic vexations.
Moreover, what spouse
But devoutly agrees
That minding her house
Is a feminine breeze?

Since a man's work is from sun to sun,
While every male in creation knows that a woman
spends her entire time having fun.

— PHYLLIS MCGINLEY.

HUBBUBB IN THE HUB

Instructions issued in Boston by the Committee of Public Safety include: Remember that everyone will help during an air raid and that you will not need an introduction to seek shelter from a householder.

HOW Boston has changed since its heyday
As the home of the peaceable cod.
When the Lowells talked only to Cabots
And the Cabots talked only to God.

Now the old-time austere ceremonies
Are skipped with un-Brahminque urgency,
And air raids give Joneses an entree—
At least for the present emergency.

— ETHEL JACOBSON.



"Oh, come now. With all that's happening these days you don't think you could frighten me?"

How to Economize

HELLO, dear! How about eating out tonight and going to a movie? We could eat at Skidmore's and then go to the Bijou.

What? . . . H'm. . . . Yes, I suppose you're right, at that. We should be economizing and cutting down these days. A little sacrificing won't hurt any of us. We can just as well get a little dinner together at home, and spend the evening reading and listening to the radio.

Still, though, there is the other side of it. What about the restaurant people? Supposing nobody ate out once in a while any more? It would cause a serious dislocation of their industry—the very thing we're trying to avoid wherever possible.

Of course, it's true that if everyone ate at home there would have to be more grocery stores to supply them. But the restaurants could become groceries. But even then, it would take a long time to complete the job of retooling the restaurants, so to speak, in order to convert them into groceries. It would cause a lot of hardships, you know.

Okay, then; we'll eat at Skidmore's and then go home. All right? . . . Good. I'll meet you there. I was just thinking, though; you could say the same thing about movie theaters. The movies are our fourth leading industry. Anyway, I think it's fourth. Anyway, it was. But the point is, what if no one ever went to the movies any more? Mr. Watkins down at the Bijou would go broke. And there's a man with two sons in the Army. And Mr. Sibert down at the bank tells me he comes in and buys a defense bond every Monday. So we'd practically be putting our money into defense bonds.

Swell, dear! Skidmore's at seven. And I tell you what. After the show, if it's not too cold, we'll walk home. There's a dime saved right there!

What? What about that nice Mr. Lynch who drives the bus? Well—uh — Oh, we'll see. Good-by, dear!

— SCOTT CORBETT.



"Two more airplane spotters to see you, doctor."

moved slowly, as slowly as a sleep-walker, across the terrace to the chairs under the silver-spotted tree, and returned as slowly, stopping every few feet to look back at the gate in the wall, and then move on again.

Diane grasped at my arm. I hadn't realized she'd moved in with me behind the curtain. Her breath made a sharp sibilant sound in her throat.

"It's mother!" she whispered.

Neither of us moved. Mrs. Hilyard reached the end of the terrace and came back again. I could see her face for an instant, gleaming white under the black shawl she wore around her head. I couldn't see it plainly; but it gave an impression of age, and of something else I couldn't define, and still can't.

She went back along the terrace, stopped and looked at the wooden gate again. She raised her left hand, pushed up her sleeve and held her hand up as if trying to see the time in the frail light through the hazy mist. Then she sat down slowly, a terrible figure, black against the gleaming whiteness of the garden chair. It made the two others emptier and hideously gaunt. She was

like one of the Weir Sisters waiting for the two others at the rendezvous on the blasted heath.

I don't know how long she sat there. It seemed very long to me, and must have seemed longer to Diane. "What do you suppose —" she whispered.

I shook my head.

The dog growled again. I heard that same grating of a rusty hinge. The garden gate opened slowly, and closed. Out of the shadow a man came. He was tall and thin and wasted. He stood for a moment looking around him. Mrs. Hilyard got up slowly. The man saw her, and came to meet her by the terrace steps. He took off his hat. She motioned with her hand toward the chairs.

As he turned his head the light caught his face for just an instant. It was the man who'd stood across the street, the man she'd said was a beggar. He was the man the police were searching all Washington to find—who had talked about the devil until Boston was afraid to take the dog out for a walk after night had fallen.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"I CAN SEE AGAIN!"

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It seemed to him they were puzzled. They prescribed rest and glasses and tonics.

After six weeks he grew disgusted with just hanging around his mother's house, and went back to Washington.

Now he could barely read the expense accounts and reports he had to pass on. Everybody was helpful, but he knew his work was deteriorating. There was no blurring or swimming of objects, but his sight had so dimmed that now there was no possibility of driving, and he needed the aid of a magnifying glass to read. "It was like," he says, "sitting in a slowly darkening room."

Then panic began to set in. With his left eye, by this time, he could distinguish only light. Darkness was closing in on the right eye. Only the will to survive and the eternal persistence of hope would not let him say even to himself that he was truly going blind. The fear and rising panic grew more out of a dread of losing, even temporarily, his freedom of action, his individual independence. This was always to be his greatest terror and then his greatest sense of loss.

By the end of January, 1937, he dared no longer go on. He left Washington then because, he says, "I was afraid that if I remained any longer I would need to be taken home."

He still couldn't believe it. "Of course," he says, "I suspected it. I had moments of depression and despair when I feared this was blindness for all my life. But these would pass, and I would cling again to the faith that a long rest and good doctoring would cure me."

He went to live with his widowed mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Kane Kellmurray, and his sister, Mrs. John H. Reilly, in Utica. He rested and took tonics and made the rounds of the doctors. For nearly two months he could not even get a definite diagnosis. Then he visited a noted ophthalmologist. He hadn't gone to an eye specialist before because he still blamed his trouble on overwork and his general run-down condition. The specialist had an apparatus which enabled him to see into Kellmurray's eyes. He promptly gave the diagnosis of retrolubular neuritis.

This meant that, perhaps as a result of the pleurisy, he had developed neuritis in the optic nerves back of the eyeballs. Now a progressive atrophy was beginning. This diagnosis was made in March, 1937. Kellmurray already was almost blind.

"Does that mean, doctor," he said, trying to hold his voice steady, "that I'm going to be blind?"

"I wouldn't say that," replied the specialist. "We'll see what we can do for you."

As he looks back on it now, Kellmurray sees this should have warned him. But the human mind dreads the finality of blindness too much.

The specialist sent a description of the case and his own diagnosis to the Mayo Clinic, asking if they could do anything for Kellmurray there beyond what he could do for him. The reply was no, but it was sympathetic and did not close the door of hope. Kellmurray clung to the fact that now, at least, there was an accurate diagnosis. Now, at least, there was something definite to combat. This, though he was too intelligent not to guess the odds, sustained him.

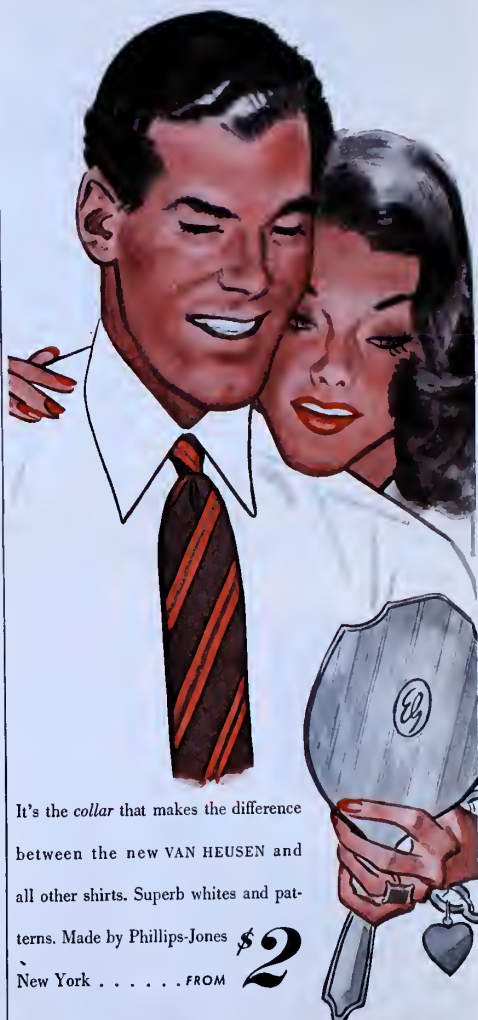
The spring went by, and the summer came, and the sun grew brighter, but Kellmurray's world grew darker. He now was blind. In his right eye he still had light perception—that is, he could barely distinguish day from night—but with his left he could see nothing.

There was one last resort. This was a series of ten intravenous injections; a classic but too often unsuccessful treatment for neuritis. How much hope the specialist had for their success Kellmurray does not know. He was not, at that stage, asking many questions. He was afraid to.

The specialist sent him to his family physician for the injections. They were given daily. On a hot afternoon in mid-July, Kellmurray was lying on the surgical table in the doctor's office. The nurse had just given him the last of the injections—a needle prick in the arm, a barely perceptible feeling of fluid being forced in, the coolness of the alcohol-saturated swab, cleansing. A minute or two passed. Then a warm, friendly hand closed on his own. He

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heard the quiet, compassionate voice of the elderly doctor: "Son, don't you think you should start learning Braille right away?"

That was how Kellmurray, not yet twenty-seven, learned that he was hopelessly blind.

Now began the slow, bitter adjustment, though first there was a period of almost blank despair. The specialist and other medical men confirmed the verdict. They now told him plainly that there was no hope.

Sometimes, in the past, when he had seen a blind person, he had wondered idly, out of a wide-ranging intellectual curiosity, what it was like to be blind. Now he knew. It had happened to him. The shock came first, an opiate, and that was numbness. For weeks he just sat, staring sightlessly, growing thinner, weaker of will every day. Sometimes he sat meekly on the porch in the sun if he was led there; but mostly in the sun, when people couldn't see him. He, who a few years ago had earned his living teaching boys games in summer camps and playgrounds, who had shown other men how to "keep the eye on the ball" and use their muscles with authority in golf, now had to be led around. He whose life, even above sports, had been concerned with books, now could not even read. He began to turn to the radio, "but it was no real compensation."

Above all, he hated and was most terrorized by his helplessness, by what he calls "the loss of individual freedom and independence." This, he declared in an essay he wrote later for his degree of master of arts at Yale, was a feeling common to all the blind who had not been always blind.

His resentment was so great that he showed it to those who tried to help him. He remembers wryly now what a trial he must have been to his devoted mother and sister, already stricken to the heart by what had happened to him. He winced from the hands of friends who tried to guide him. There was a young woman in Utica whom it had seemed likely he someday would marry. She rallied to his side, was solicitous and tender; and that was just the trouble. He resented openly her solicitude and the dependence on his part that it implied. The engagement, if so it could be called, had not reached the formal stage, and so it was not broken. "It just sort of died out."

Groping Back

But this resentment was also a sign of renascence. Kellmurray had been too active physically and intellectually to sit numb and brooding forever. His mind began to cast about again, seeking an escape from this prison. At first this flexing of mental and psychic muscles took the form of going back over the past. His boyhood in Utica, the praise he got because he finished high school in three years, the championship playground baseball team he coached in 1923, the years as an undergraduate at Yale, the teaching in Utica, which he did not like; the garage business, which he did like, but at which he had failed; the two and a half years in Washington.

He discovered that where he had been happiest of all had been at Yale. Those four years stood out in more pleasant detail than any other period. He remembered now that he had known at nine that he wanted to go to Yale, after reading the Frank Merriwell books. He remembered now that Yale hadn't been like those stories

when he got there, but that there he had, for the first and only time, found what he wanted. He remembered now, with a poignant sense of loss and desire, how he had always planned to go back, to work there, spend his life there.

One day, seated in the sun on the porch, he said to himself, *Well, why not?*

What had seemed impractical enough before was apparently impossible now that he was blind and helpless. But the more he thought of it the more he saw that this had always been his dream, and that now he had to do it to prove himself and to save himself. He faltered his own way into the house and got his sister to write a letter for him to the New York State Commission for the Blind. How could they help him to learn Braille? This, he knew, would have to be the first step.

A teacher of Braille came to his home within a few days. Braille is a system of embossed symbols for the letters of the alphabet, punctuation, and common combinations of letters and simple, frequently recurring words, to be read through the fingers by sense of touch. Kellmurray threw himself into this study so furiously that he acquired in three months a facility usually not attained for a year.

It was like, Kellmurray says, a crack in a door leading from a dark room. The teacher herself inspired him, because she, too, was blind, and yet she had attained a considerable degree of self-sufficiency and independence.

His weight, which had gone down to 110 pounds, started to climb again. He began to school himself toward facing again a world he could no longer see and never expected to see again. He taught himself, with only his mother and sister to witness the first fumbling, embarrassed attempts, to feed himself with ordinary table implements. At first he spilled his food and missed with his spoon and stuck his cheek with his fork. When at last he ventured out to dine, it gave him great pride to discover that new companions,

unwarned, could not tell from his table technique that he was blind. The surface appearance of his eyes was not marred, and he trained himself to gaze in the direction of the voice that addressed him, and to appear as if he were looking where he was going. He practiced letting his gaze wander about a room as a sighted person normally would do. He began going out to parties. It was slow, painful work, with many bitter moments and some of acute despair.

Light on Darkness

His mother and sister never quite got used to the fact of his blindness. His mother several times forgot. She would say, "Look how pretty the flowers are now," or ask, "Did you see how odd that man looked passing by?" His friends, too, made such mistakes, but by now they were sources of pride to him rather than pain.

He found he had a keener perception of sound and smell, a greater sensitivity of touch, a closer recognition of distances between things he touched and locations he knew. But Kellmurray strikes repeatedly, in his essay for his master's degree, against what he calls "the fallacious doctrine of compensation." He points out that "touch can never become a perfect substitute for sight." And he denies that "the blind, as members of society and even as human beings, are . . . possessed of the 'mystical' qualities which are often attributed to them."

There were still incidents which brought sharply home to him his differences from the "sighted," as the blind say of those who can see. Sometimes these were amusing, such as one during a violent rainstorm one night.

He sat with his mother and sister in the living room, absorbed in a Braille printing of Willa Cather's novel, *Lucy Gayheart*. His sister was reading a book, and his mother the newspaper. Suddenly the lights went out and the radio went dead. His mother and sister



"Some people have all the luck. All I've been gettin' is fish."

cried out, calling directions to each other in the dark.

"Please," he complained without thought, "don't make so much noise. Can't you see I'm reading?" A contrasting incident had no such humor. It was, in fact, frightening. It grew out of the second step he knew he had to take along the path to independence. This was the acquisition of a Seeing Eye dog.

He had written to Seeing Eye, Inc., had been investigated and had received a letter telling him to come to their headquarters at Morristown, New Jersey, on January 30, 1938, prepared to stay for a month of training with a dog. Kellmurray refused to allow anyone to accompany him. From the station at Utica he wired a request for a Travelers Aid representative to meet him at New York. This much he did not resent, because many persons not blind needed Travelers Aid.

The representative put him on a bus for Orange. He got there all right, left that bus, and stood on a street corner to wait for another bus to take him to Morristown. It was five o'clock of a Sunday afternoon. He heard busses go by, but he could not tell which one to hail. There was no sound of walking feet, no sound of voices. The corner seemed deserted. He felt utterly alone in the world, in the darkness. "In those terrible moments I felt worse than ever before, I think, or since," he says. "I was so helpless. I was afraid."

He was wearing dark glasses and carrying a white cane. Usually he resented them, for the black of the glasses and the whiteness of the cane were primarily badges to warn people that the wearer was blind. But now they rescued him. A man came along, recognized the symbols and put him on the right bus.

Kellmurray wanted a Seeing Eye dog, because he knew he needed that additional independence and facility of movement if he was to attain his goal. He was not prepared for Shep. Even today Kellmurray feels that his meeting with that dog was the most important of his life.

Four-Footed Friend

Kellmurray was never alone again, in all the rest of his blindness. Shep took away almost the last vestige of helplessness, of dependence. With the dog in his harness Kellmurray could go anywhere, do so many things his blindness had barred him from before. A Seeing Eye dog, in a fashion almost miraculous to behold, will direct his master through traffic, even interpreting traffic lights. He will prevent him from bumping into anything, will keep him away from and protect him against danger. A Seeing Eye dog will never bark except as warning or greeting, will bite no one who does not seek to hurt his master, will never leave his master, will not be distracted from his duty by another dog, or by a cat, or by any novelty or fear. He gets to know his master's moods and desires, and to anticipate them in a manner almost unbelievable.

Shep, a magnificent German shepherd dog, a breed commonly mislabeled police dog, became a part of him. "I mean that literally," says Kellmurray. "I never, after the first few days, thought of him as a separate entity. I could not think of myself without him. He was not a dog to me, nor another creature. He was simply part of me." He went often now to the theater, to concerts, to the movies. Seeing Eye dogs are allowed everywhere, because

they know how to behave anywhere, but on one trip to the movies Shep's solicitude for his master caused an embarrassing disturbance.

With that amazing understanding of his kind, the dog led his master to a seat down front, where Kellmurray could hear better. This, because Kellmurray, of course, followed the action entirely through his hearing, was important. Shep crouched silently at his feet. Suddenly the lion that is the MGM trade-mark appeared on the screen and roared. Instantly Shep went into action, barking his defiance and springing to the defense of his master. He tried to leap at the screen to get at the lion. Fortunately, Kellmurray still had hold of his harness, and at a word from him Shep subsided, though he quivered aggressively for a time.

A Dream Comes True

Now Kellmurray felt he was ready for the final phase of his campaign—to try to sell others on the idea that he, a blind man, could be a useful citizen and guide others in their education.

He began to write letters and to call upon people whom he needed to persuade. He had ideas for a thesis on education of the blind and for research he could do that might point the way to better understanding and training of the blind. This would justify scholarships to finance that research.

Because he came, not begging but with ideas and the offer to do useful work, he began to get good letters. The American Foundation for the Blind, the New York State Commission for the Blind, The Lighthouse in New York, and the officials of Yale became interested. Two of his old mentors of undergraduate days, Dr. C. W. Mendell, who had been dean of the college, and Dr. Chauncey B. Tinker, who had taught him English, took a hand. Dean Edgar S. Furniss, of the Graduate School, became convinced. And above all, Kellmurray sold himself and his idea to Dr. Albert S. Crawford, director of the Department of Personnel Study and the Bureau of Appointments at Yale.

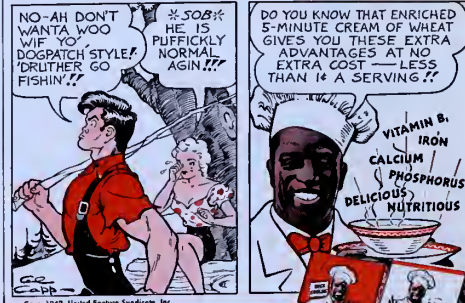
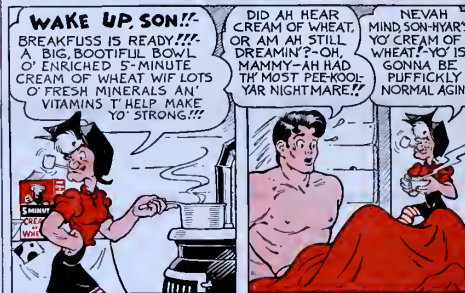
It had been an impossible thing he had set himself to do, and the climb was long and hard, because at times he had to fight himself as well. But, in September, 1939, Kellmurray went back to Yale. He went as a scholarship graduate student, with two jobs in addition. One was under Dr. Crawford, the other was that of freshman counselor. He was at last where he wanted to be and doing exactly what he had always wanted to do. Out of blindness he had achieved his dream.

He was reasonably happy now in his room in McClellan Hall, listening to the problems of freshmen. Acting as a "sort of second assistant secretary" to Doctor Crawford, with the aid of dictating machines and a student reader, was preparing for the career he wanted, and also gave him the sense of independence and earning his way that he greatly needed. Working on his essay for his master's degree—again with the aid of dictating machines and a reader—gave him the knowledge he was doing something useful.

He made more friends than ever before. He went out more than ever before. He took girls to dinner and concerts, the theater and the movies. He went to many parties. A young woman who met him at a party was impressed by what she described to friends afterward as his "conversational brilliance."

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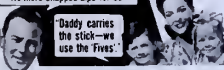
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Only afterward did we learn he was blind. He went swimming, and did fairly well, though there was a new timidity, because he could not be sure he was swimming in the right direction. He tried dancing again, and was rather successful at it, though he says he had never cared much for it anyway and so did not persueve. He even played golf again. Friends teed the ball for him and lined him up. He would stoop and feel the ball. Then he would straighten and swing. Considering that the first rule in golf is "Keep your eye on the ball" he got phenomenal drives. Some were 250 yards. His approach shots were remarkably good, too, but on the green, of course, his game collapsed. Nevertheless, his plaint about his putting sounds more like a duffer's than a blind man's. "Sometimes," he laments, "I'd need six putts to hole the ball."

All this was no true compensation. His master's essay, *The Education of the Blind* in the United States: 1832-1940, is impersonal, but here and there it gives flashes of insight into how keenly he felt his blindness. The repetition of acorn for the "fallacious theory of compensation" speaks eloquently on that point. No matter how he adjusted himself, no matter what fate he put on it for the world, his was still a life of darkness. There still were times when his spirit sagged, and when, alone in his room, he railed against his fate. There had been cases of recovery from his type of blindness, but they were so rare that he had never heard of them, for it would have been unlikely to raise a hope with such staggering odds against it.

There was in his apartment a bed that folded into the wall. This he referred to as "an arm of the devil," and he more than half feared it. One day last September his fears were justified. It struck his foot, injuring it painfully. When the pain persisted he called a doctor, who bandaged it and told him to rest.

Annoyingly, the injury, though slight, refused to heal properly. The reopening of the fall term was nearing, and with it increased work. So, in mid-September, Kellmurray entered the college infirmary to see if they could speed recovery. He was discovered to be run-down and nervous; and, so, heavy doses of Vitamin B₁ were prescribed. He was told to continue them for months.

Campus Miracle

Whether this had anything to do with what followed, no doctor will say officially. There is no scientific proof one way or the other. Kellmurray and his doctors speak of it as they mention the pleurisy which preceded his blindness. One thing seemed to follow the other, and that as far as they will go.

At 4:30 in the afternoon of November 10, 1941, Kellmurray sat in the red easy chair nearest the windows of his sitting room. He was listening to the radio. Shep, as always, was at his feet. Suddenly his right eye began to water freely. Tears ran down his cheek. This was the first time he had ever shed a tear. Kellmurray sat there tense, wondering what this presaged, and afraid. And then, just as suddenly, he realized he could see. He looked down, and there was Shep. So often he had wondered exactly how Shep, who meant so much to him, looked like. And now he saw.

He got to his feet, and Shep, anxious, rose too. He began walking about the

room, nattering things he'd known since only through touch. He wanted to assure himself that he really saw them. He walked to the window and stared dreamily. And then Shep, whining joyfully, leaped up and began licking his eyes.

Kellmurray believes Shep knew he had regained his sight. He believes Seeing Eye dogs can tell. He points to the wall and says he saw the rug on the floor or path will get out of the way when a blind person approaches, but remain at ease if the oncomer has sight.

He sat down again. He was so violently shaken he was nauseated. He could not think of anything to do. He did not believe it was true. It was only the right eye that had recovered sight. For the left there still was only complete darkness. None of it might last.

Some friends, two men and a woman, called in. He did not tell them what had happened. They noticed he was distraught, and after a few minutes they left. By the time they left, the sight of that right eye was dimming again.

He hurried across to the quarters of his current reader and personal friend, John H. Kennedy, a graduate student in history. He was due there anyway. He and Kennedy were to take two young women to dinner and the concert that evening.

Kennedy took one look at him. "What's the matter, Kell? Don't you feel well?"

"No," said Kellmurray. "Look, I don't think I can make it for dinner and the concert. Make my apologies to the girls for being late. I'll tell them I—"

And then he blurted out to his friend, "John, for a half hour I had vision in my right eye. And now . . . it's gone again!"

Kennedy said, "Oh." That was all. He saw Kellmurray was too shaken to talk. The girls arrived.

"Don't say anything about it," Kellmurray whispered.

Kennedy explained, "Kell doesn't feel well," and they could see that was so. They dropped him at his quarters and went on.

Kellmurray telephoned Dr. Eugene M. Blake, clinical professor of ophthalmology in the Yale Graduate School of Medicine. Doctor Blake was familiar with his case. Kellmurray told him what had happened.

Doctor Blake was encouraging. "It sounds promising," he said. "Go to bed."

Before he fell asleep, Kellmurray had a brief flash of sight. It was gone again. Then it faded and he slept. He was awakened at 11:15 P.M. by Kennedy's entrance. Kennedy switched on the light.

"My God, you're ugly!" said Kellmurray. And then he burst out laughing, because he could see again.

Later he tried to explain he was only kidding, and found that Kennedy, who isn't ugly at all, already understood he had only been trying to mask the sudden welling of joy with a wisecrack. Sight never left him again. It was there. Instead it strengthened steadily. But the left eye remained completely blind in the days that ensued.

He told his superiors about it, including Dr. Norman S. Buck, dean of freshmen. He told them he would coast along and see what developed. The medical men told him this was the real thing; that sight had come to the eye to stay and improve, but that they couldn't predict definitely about the other eye.

Nine days went by. College closed for the Thanksgiving holidays, and Kellmurray went to spend them with

his friends, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Morse, in Hamden, a suburb of New Haven.

At 11:30 o'clock on Thanksgiving Eve, Doctor Morse, and an early call the next day and had retired. Kellmurray and Mrs. Morse were sitting by the fireplace, listening to a recording of Flagstad and Melchior singing a duet. Suddenly the left eye began to tear copiously, exactly as the other had that fateful afternoon. For a moment, afraid to hope, he tried to conceal it from Mrs. Morse. Then an explanation broke from him as the thing was afraid to hope for happened.

"I can see!" he cried. "I can see with both eyes now!"

Reprieve From Night

That is how Bernard Michael Kellmurray, at thirty-one, got his reprieve from the night. The doctors say it is, barring an entirely new and unrelated disease or injury to his eyes, a permanent cure. Two months after he regained his sight he could see well enough to recognize friends at twenty feet. Improvement, the doctors said, should continue for some time. He never will regain the keen vision he had when he was good professional, and he may always need strong glasses for more than casual reading. But he can see again, and there is no longer the specter of a life in the night for him.

He saw no great physical change about him. What surprised more was how little change there was in the appearance of things. Automobiles were somewhat more streamlined, and women's hats looked as if "they were playing a joke." But that was about all.

He intends to continue at Yale, to work for a Ph.D. degree, and to spend his life in educational and vocational guidance work. Already he has taken on additional duties. When war broke out he offered to enlist. He was told he could do more good in the Bureau of Military Training information which was set up at Yale. So he took on that work in addition to his role of freshman counselor and his job in Doctor Crawford's office.

He wants to continue his research into the problems of the blind, and to preach, through that research and through writing, a better understanding of the blind. He knows that the blind are individuals as different from one another as are the seeing. He believes, as he wrote in his master's essay, that the blind "should never be classed as a group of homogeneous identities. . . . They have the right to be considered and treated as individuals." The sighted public . . . must refrain from leading the blind, and let the blind lead themselves."

Shep is still with him. One of the first things that struck him when he regained his sight was "What about Shep? I can't be sure to lose him." There was the moral obligation, however, as he called W. H. Ebeling, executive vice president of Seeing Eye, Inc. He told him what had happened and how he felt about it.

"Keep him," said Ebeling, "but take his harness off."

Shep adjusted himself easily to the new conditions. Where previously he had accepted his harness willingly, even eagerly, he now resented it. When Kellmurray put it on him for the benefit of photographers, Shep fussed and glared at it.

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